

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 12 MAY 2022
title: RIBBLE VALLEY LOCAL PLAN – REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION
submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS – DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the consultation report on Strategy Matters and to agree to undertake consultation in line with Regulation 18 as part of the ongoing Ribble Valley Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Community Objectives – To ensure that the borough remains a sustainable place to live and work.
 - Corporate Priorities – The authority has a legal duty to update its Local Plan for the area.
 - Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that work is progressing on the production of a new Local Plan for the borough. This intends to replace the adopted Core Strategy by setting out the strategic policies aimed at guiding development within the borough, bringing forward provisions of the HED-DPD as well as including non-strategic policies to be used for development management purposes.
- 2.2 The local plan process has a number of key stages which are set out in detail in the Local Development Scheme, an update of which is the subject of a separate report on this committee's agenda. In preparing a new local plan the council is required to promote the opportunity to discuss and debate key issues and options to be considered in forming its plan. The document the subject of this committee report marks a first key stage in generating stakeholder input to the plan making process and is intended as a vehicle upon which to base our engagement.
- 2.3 Critically at this stage it is not a draft plan and its proposals and commentary have no status in planning terms. This stage is designed to raise issues and seek views from stakeholders through a round of statutory consultations that will follow the prescribed regulatory requirements of the plan making process.
- 2.4 The outcome of this stage will be used to help shape the draft local plan which itself will be subject to further rounds of consultation. Other areas of policy development in the light of ongoing evidence base work, monitoring, and response to the strategic issues raised in this document will also be subject to a programme of ongoing engagement through the regulation 18 stage with further reports to be considered by members.

3 THE REGULATION 18 STAGE

- 3.1 The proposed consultation will be based upon the document attached to this report.

Members are asked to consider the issues raised in the report and agree that it be used as the consultation vehicle for the first stage of public engagement for the local plan. If agreed a consultation version of the document will be published inviting views.

- 3.2 The structure of the document provides context to the process and what the Council considers to be its understanding of the area in terms of a spatial portrait, outline of the key evidence prepared to date, and the proposed vision and objectives considered appropriate to take forward as the basis of a new local plan.
- 3.3 For the purposes of this stage of consultation to inform how the council shapes its new plan views are invited upon the Vision and Objectives, but critically on the approach to establishing a Development Strategy for the area. It is from the Development Strategy that the proposals of the new plan will need to flow, and it is important that the council has provided the opportunity to test options and invite comments.
- 3.4 As members will note the focus at this stage is on strategic issues which will need to be tested and developed in order to inform the plan. The key issues relate to the level of housing requirement, affordable housing issues to be considered and the approach to planning for employment and growth. The latter is important to determine as it is closely related to and will have an influence on housing matters and ultimately the patterns of development to be planned for in the borough.
- 3.5 Discussion is set out in the report around the development strategy options however the key strategic discussions that link in with this are the level of housing requirement and the approach to employment growth. To date the analysis indicates that based on the governments Standard Methodology approach there is a very limited need to plan for additional housing over and above what is currently committed certainly within the short to medium term. However, there are some factors set out in the document that need to be tested in relation to the reality that commitments are being used up which may drive a need for an early review or an option to make some additional but phased allocations as part of this plan to help smooth the transition from high housing numbers to a lower level of housing.
- 3.6 In relation to Employment and Jobs growth the key issue to be tested is the approach to supporting the local economy and planning for new land. As with housing this will be an important area to gain stakeholders views before committing to any particular approach in a new plan.
- 3.7 The regulation 18 stage is an important opportunity to invite comments on the Council's evidence base in particular any gaps as well as issues which the council has not identified yet stakeholders consider are important. This will inform the need for further work as the plan is formulated.
- 3.8 In addition to the evidence base, the Council will also publish the first element of the parallel Sustainability Appraisal (SA) work which is the subject of a separate report on the committee's agenda. The SA is a process of testing the approach to and development of the new plan against environmental considerations to ensure the policies contained in the plan will provide the most sustainable outcomes and support the requirement to deliver sustainable development in accord with national policy. Although published at the same time the SA will be subject to its own process of consultation.
- 3.9 It is important to note that the response to consultation at this stage in terms of representations and comments will not in themselves be part of the testing of the local plan by way of the Public Examination by the Inspector. However, the council will, in reporting the outcome of the consultation and in particular how this stage

(Regulation 18) has helped shape the local plan, need to be able to demonstrate that it has provided adequate opportunities to have input to the plan and how the council has responded. It is an important informative part of the process.

- 3.10 Issues raised in the document will be subject to a formal stage of consultation that will run over a 6-week period from publication. It will need to be undertaken in accordance with the regulations and in line with the methods set out in the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, (SCI). The SCI is available on the council web site. The consultation will be published on the Councils web site with stakeholders notified directly where they have registered an interest. The Council will need to ensure a range of statutory consultees are invited to comment and this will include engaging with neighbouring local authorities through our responsibilities under the duty to cooperate. As previously discussed, the consultation will seek to focus on digital based consultation through the web site however to provide alternative routes to be involved paper reference copies will be available at local libraries.
- 3.11 Whilst Parish Councils are a statutory consultee and will be notified as part of the process, as previously, a commitment has been given through the Council's Parish Council Liaison Committee to hold a focused meeting during the consultation period on the local plan for the Ribble Valley Parishes to ensure Parishes have their own opportunity to discuss issues in a forum setting, share concerns and have the opportunity to play a key role in the formative regulation 18 stage.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – The costs to undertake this consultation are contained within an identified budget to help deliver the local plan review. There are no additional revenue cost implications as a result of the consideration of this report.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council has a legal duty to prepare a Local Plan the consultation process is set out in associated regulations.
- Political – There is significant interest in the local plan process and any potential development pressures upon villages, services, and infrastructure within the Borough.
- Reputation – An up-to-date local plan is an issue of significance in the local community and helps demonstrate that the council is meeting its duties and obligations and is a well-run authority.
- Equality & Diversity – No specific issues identified. The consultation process is required to be in line with the adopted SCI which seeks to ensure equality and diversity is addressed through council consultation

5 RECOMMEND THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Endorse the content of the Regulation 18 Strategic Matters Consultation Document and agree that the matters be published for 6 weeks statutory consultation and that the Director of Economic Development and Planning be authorised to prepare the necessary consultation materials to satisfy the requirements for Regulation 18 of the Development Plan Regulations and to undertake appropriate stakeholder consultation.

- 5.2 Agree that the outcome of the consultation is considered by the Development Plan Working Group before reporting back to this committee.



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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Plan Files and Publications.

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